

TESTIMONY OF
WINSTON HEIMER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MARCH 3, 2020

IN SUPPORT OF HB 5366 – AAC THE COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Senator Lesser, Senator Kelly, Representative Scanlon, Representative Pavalock-D Amato and members of the Committee on Insurance and Real Estate: My name is Winston Heimer. I am Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans.

I write on behalf of the 50,000 members of the CT Alliance for Retired Americans. We are concerned not only for our members, but for all our citizens who are in need of affordable prescription drugs.

A 2018 poll of Connecticut residents showed major concern about rising costs of prescription drugs and support for government action across party lines. Those concerns are just as relevant if not more so today. There was nearly unanimous support requiring drug companies to provide advance notice of price increases and information to justify those increases. Nearly as many support the government setting standard prices for drugs to make them affordable.

HB5366 will go a ways to address some of these issues. As you know, the bill caps coinsurance, co-pays, deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses for prescriptions to 250 dollars per insured per month. Additionally, it limits the wholesale costs on outpatient prescriptions to 102 percent of the consumer price index. It requires the Department of Consumer Protection to request the Federal Government permission for us to import safe and effective – and less costly - Canadian prescription drugs. Additionally, it requires at least ninety days' notice from a health insurer to remove a prescription drug from its formulary list.

I'm sure you know all this because you've read the bill. But an overwhelming majority of those who have not had that opportunity would be thankful to know that these measures are under consideration. The skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs are a major contributing factor in the rise in health costs in general. It's high time that we bring costs under control.

The message is clear -- prescription drug costs are rising, and Connecticut residents want something done about it. We urge the Committee to do the right thing and support HB5366.